

VZCZCXRO6479
PP RUEHDBU
DE RUEHNT #0843 1151152
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 251152Z APR 07
FM AMEMBASSY TASHKENT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7758
INFO RUEHTA/AMEMBASSY ASTANA 9131
RUEHAH/AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT 3013
RUEHEK/AMEMBASSY BISHKEK 3615
RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE 3479
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0849
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0292
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 1150
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 1983
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 0755

C O N F I D E N T I A L TASHKENT 000843

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DEPT FOR SCA/CEN AND DRL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/25/2017

TAGS: [PHUM UZ](#)

SUBJECT: ANDIJON COURT CONVICTS RIGHTS ACTIVIST GULBAHOR
TURAYEVA

REF: A. 05 TASHKENT 770 (NOTAL)
[1](#)B. 05 TASHKENT 2674 (NOTAL)

Classified By: AMB. JON R. PURNELL, FOR REASONS 1.4 (B, D)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: An Andijon court has convicted human rights activist Gulbahor Turayeva of anticonstitutional activity, slander, and distributing subversive materials, and sentenced her to six years in prison. Turayeva had spoken out against alleged forced hysterectomies and gave eyewitness testimony to emboffs and journalists about the 2005 Andijon events. The case bears all the hallmarks of a classic political prosecution. Turayeva thus joins a growing list of women political prisoners as the European Union prepares to decide on the future of its sanctions against Uzbekistan. End summary.

[1](#)2. (SBU) On April 24, according to Internet press reports, the Andijon Province Criminal Court convicted Andijon-based human rights activist Gulbahor Turayeva on charges of anticonstitutional activity, slander, and distributing materials threatening public order. The court sentenced her to six years' imprisonment. Turayeva was reportedly arrested on January 14 as she attempted to cross the Uzbek border from Kyrgyzstan carrying over 100 copies of books written by Muhammad Solikh, the exiled leader of the opposition political party, Erk.

[1](#)3. (C) In early 2005, Turayeva, a forensic pathologist, widely publicized allegations of forced hysterectomies on women in the Ferghana Valley. Turayeva told emboffs and journalists at the time that, as part of a government-sanctioned policy to reduce the national birth rate, hospitals were frequently sterilizing women who had recently given birth, without medical need, and without patients' knowledge or consent (ref A). Turayeva also spoke out prominently in the wake of the 2005 Andijon violence, telling emboffs and others that she had personally seen approximately 500 corpses at an Andijon school the day after the events. In her last communication with the Embassy in late 2005, she informed Poloff that authorities had filed a criminal case against her in retaliation for a meeting with Poloff (ref B).

[1](#)4. (C) Comment: The circumstances of Turayeva's trial and the charges in the case bear all the hallmarks of a classic politically-motivated prosecution. Turayeva thus joins a

growing list of women human rights activists imprisoned for their criticism of the government. The list includes Human Rights Watch local staffer Umida Niyazova, who was arrested at the same border crossing point as Turayeva under similar circumstances and now awaits trial; and Ferghana-based activist Mutabar Tajibayeva, who was convicted in March 2006 and sentenced to eight years' imprisonment. Turayeva's conviction carries all the more weight now, as the European Union prepares to evaluate Uzbekistan's "concrete, positive steps" on human rights and decide whether to continue or alter its sanctions against the country.

PURNELL